

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَیْهِمُ السَّلَامُ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. X. ZALHAJJ-MUHARRAM 1340-41 A.H.
 Nos. 8 & 9. AUG.—SEPT. 1922.

CONTENTS.

Noble Salah-ud-Din A. Board, Jr.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Notes	306
The Sufi's Diary—Latent Human Faculties, Séances, Working Miracles	310
Think of Your Own House. By R. LISSAN	319
From the Holy Qur-án. By M. Y. KHAN	321
The Story of the Passion and Its Date. By B. DAUD SHAH	323
Islam and Modern Civilization. By C. A. SOORMA, B.A.	327
Table Talk	339
The Gospel of Felicity. By M. Y. KHAN	346
Christianity in Her Own Land	352
Democracy in Islam. By ABDUL MAJID, M.A.	356
Holy Anecdotes. By BABAR	359
What They Think of Us	363
Father Degan on Islamic Morals. By H. WAHEED-UD-DIN GREEN	371
"India in the Balance"	372
Review	388
Prophet in War Time. By MUSTAFAKHAN, B.A.	393
The Woking Mission Letter	395
What is Islam?	399

THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

With English Translation and Commentary, printed on high-class India paper, and bound in green flexible leather, price £2 10s. ; Pluvinsin, £2. Postage and packing for both qualities: United Kingdom, 2s. ; abroad, 4s. Prospectus and sample pages sent free on application. Apply to "Islamic Review," The Mosque, Woking, England, or to Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam, Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore, or to "Islamic Review" Office, Azeez Manzil, Lahore, India.

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House
 —111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday,
 at 1 p.m.

Service, Sermon and Lectures every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking,
 at 3.15 p.m.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

NOTES

Who is the Practical Teacher ?

At the half-yearly meeting of the Cambridge and District Federation, Mr. Andrew Buchanan, J.P., said : " If Genoa had opened with the reading of the Sermon on the Mount, and that had dictated the policy there, there would have been no more troubles and no more conferences." He declared " The need of a Brotherhood and Sisterhood to bring about the Brotherhood of Democracy, without which they could not solve the problems of the day." He said : " He had not been in a church because he was one of those millions of men and women who felt that the Church had no message for them." Another speaker, Mrs. M. Joscelyne, remarked " that they were told that men and women did not care for religion ; she did not believe it ; she believed that they were disgusted with the religion that was served to them. The women did not want sloppy, sentimental religion, they wanted something worth while."

The above speaks for itself. Christianity is discredited, and its disruption seems to be inevitable. What is the reason ? Its impracticability. It is ethical and visionary only. The lion will not lie down with the lamb, unless the lamb is inside the lion.

The faith of Islam is characterized by its sound common-sense and its practical nature as well as precept. The Qur-án, xxxiii. 21, says, " Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day, and remembers Allah much." This points to the real practicability and liveness of Muhammad, who in his life was an exemplar by his actions as a warrior, by his teachings as a law-giver, statesman and judge, and by his domestic life as a man. This is the real standard, practice and precept combined,

NOTES

and not precept alone, which cannot accomplish any real work. Indeed, it is the distinguishing characteristic of his life that he not only gave practical rules of guidance in all walks of life, but gave in his life a practical illustration of all those rules.

The Church at the Cross Roads.

The second report of the Prayer Book Revision Committee of the National Assembly has just been published, and is curious reading. Mr. Athelstan Riley holds in his *Minority Report*, "that the Church of England is in a state of unparalleled confusion and disruption is almost inevitable. The present chaotic condition of the Church is, in his view, sufficient ground for postponing revision."

The report discusses questions of ritual, vestments and things pertaining to the Mass, the reconstruction of the Canon, the Sacraments, Baptism and Confirmation. Is not the Committee's report indicative of the existence of externalism, an undue attention to outward matters, historical details and ceremonial, and a want of ability to see the real reason of the want of success and their failure to satisfy the spiritual needs of the people; exactly as Jesus condemned the Scribes and Pharisees, in *Matthew xxiii. 25*: "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." This is an indisputable reference to outward show and inward lack of the real truth of things.

What is Wrong with the Church ?

The "Declaration of Faith" which is now agitating the minds of the Established Church is a sign of the times. The basic principle of faith and true religion is that it must be undivided. The teaching of Jesus clearly points to the unity of faith, but the present and past conditions show controversy, hair-splitting, some pointing to one

ISLAMIC REVIEW

road, some to another—disunion and change. Can this be the true belief? The essential prerequisite of the spirit is unity. Is this the Universal Church? A house divided against itself cannot stand. The Church does not follow the spirit of the teaching of Jesus, but only its letter. Jesus said: “Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you *even* to the end of the world” (Matthew xxviii. 20). Regarding the transubstantiation, “If any man say unto you, Lo, here is Christ or there, believe him not” (Matthew xxiv. 23).

Christian Government and Zionism.

How a Christian can conscientiously lend his support to the Zionist scheme if he has got the least respect for the words of Jesus, is a matter of surprise to many.

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate . . . till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.”

If these words of Jesus are true, the Jews cannot settle in Palestine as their national home, unless and until Jesus is accepted by them as him that cometh in the Name of the Lord. The words should command respect from Christians; but what an irony of fate! The present Government of this country, ostensibly most jealous for Christian susceptibilities in the case of Turkey, has yet deliberately taken measures to find a national home for those people whose house is, by the words of Christ, doomed to remain desolate until they shall become Christian. It is quite clear that there is no question of religion here, but rather of irreligion, prompting the pursuit of some imperialistic scheme and responsible for all such glaringly inconsistent actions. Unfortunately every step taken by the statesmen concerned is making the problem of Cross versus Crescent more and more acute. To support Zionism is a downright

NOTES

insult to the words of Jesus, and yet the same Government which displays such delicate sensitiveness for Christian concerns in the reconstruction of Turkey, does not scruple to flaunt frankly anti-Christian tendencies in the case of Jerusalem.

The Month of Pilgrimage.

I'd-ul-Azha— Qurbani Bairam—our Festival of Sacrifice, in commemoration of Abraham's offer of his only son to God—will, as usual, be celebrated at the Mosque, Woking. Our brethren in faith, friends and sympathizers in this country, are cordially invited to join us in the Festival, which will fall this year on Friday, August 4th.

Father Degan on Islamic Morals.

The *Sunday Chronicle*, issue June 18th, reports, under the above title, a Churchman to have made the following observations in the course of an address :—

A shocking custom that is growing apace at the present day is the taking of separate instead of joint holidays by husbands and wives.

No woman should allow her husband to go running off to spend a holiday "on his own."

At this very moment scores of married men are week-ending at the seaside with single girls, whom they provide with a wedding-ring in order to deceive the public and the landlord of the hotel.

Many a man who ought to have a comfortable balance at the bank is actually in a tight corner financially because he has been wicked and mad enough to compromise himself by spending a week-end with a merciless vampire who can smile like an angel.

To men I say : "Spend your money on your wives. Harpies levy blackmail. God knows and sees all. *Remember that you are citizens of Christian England, not of Mohammedan Turkey.*"¹

To wives I would suggest that they endeavour to retain their hold upon their husbands' love by remaining "pals" after marriage, and by taking an intelligent interest in their business.

To unmarried girls I would say : "Turn a deaf ear to denunciations of their wives by married men. The colour of their socks is of more importance to them than a girl's purity,"

Perversion of facts could hardly be carried farther. Whatever else Islam may be misrepresented

¹ Italics ours.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

sented to be, there are no two opinions as to its rigid purity of morals. Friend and foe are at one—at least on one point—no “painted vampires” in the street or park of a Muslim country, no “seaside” or “week-end” wild-oat-sowing. We wish the Rev. Father had confined himself to the beam in his own eye rather than cast an unmerited aspersion on Islam. Elsewhere in these pages we publish a copy of a letter addressed to the rev. gentleman on his unwarranted vilification of Islam by one of our English brethren, Mr. H. Waheed-ud-Din Green, whom we introduced to our readers in our March number.

THE SUFI'S DIARY

Latent Human Faculties, Séances, Working Miracles.

ELECTRICITY in the battery, and electricity operating under the domination and control of the human mind, are two different things. One is accumulated brute force, the other a force working with design and purpose, such as we observe in telegraphy and telephony, wireless or otherwise. The human mind in the latter case, though working through telegraphy, yet stands beside it, accomplishing its design through the medium of electricity by means of the requisite appliances. It cannot subdue the electric force to its will without the use of certain plant and appliances. Suppose, however, that the human mind entered into a battery of electricity, or became clothed with an electric body instead of with a physical body, man would then become unable to do all that he is doing through electric appliances. Sometimes, for example, we have to travel a distance of hundreds of miles. That is the intention of the mind. Its desire is to reach its destination with electric rapidity, but its present covering—that is to say, its physical body—retards its purpose. It is compelled, therefore, to resort to the quickest available means of conveyance, and in

THE SUFI'S DIARY

these days one operated by electricity is generally selected when available. But if man's body were of electricity, then it could, in the twinkling of an eye, travel whithersoever it desired to go. Such a thing is not an impossibility. Our mental working illustrates it clearly. The minute we think of a place, it comes before our mental vision. Of course the vision brings only those things before us which we have already seen; and the whole process we ascribe, in popular parlance to the power of imagination. But with an electric body such as I have suggested, we could reach the place personally and become cognisant of all its surroundings. In the last instalment of this diary I referred to a similar experience of mine, in which, while sitting in my own room, I found myself in the house of another gentleman at a distance of four miles from my place. I was cognisant of both the environments, that is to say, I was fully aware of two rooms, one in my house and the other in the house of the gentleman. I was also conscious of myself standing between them both, the distance of four miles between the two being bridged over by a viaduct, as it were, of electricity.

If the æther in its first collocation gives birth to electrons, which through various complexities and complications assume the form of the human body with the mind as its ruler, then the phenomenon I have cited becomes an intelligible possibility. The human body, after all, is only a gross form of electricity. The coverings on it are too thick to allow exhibition of its electric qualities. Our power of sight and of hearing, as well as our other organs of sense, could electrically work wonders, and they are quite capable of doing so inasmuch as they arose at their inception out of electronic complexities, were it not for the manifold coverings they have assumed in the manifold stages of their journey from the nebula to the human mind. The things

ISLAMIC REVIEW

which we see in visions and dreams, and which we experience in trance are apt illustrations of our capabilities of this kind. While asleep or in a trance, our physical nature and its working become dormant ; in other words, the electric elements in us become freed of their hampering environments, and it is not to be wondered at if we see and hear things beyond the normal limits of sight and hearing—not surprising that sometimes our inner sight sees events which are yet to come. We Sufis do believe that all events, if they are ultimately destined to make their appearance on the earthly plane do, in fact, make their appearance on other planes as well, before they reach that of earth. Their shape on every such other plane through which they pass in their evolutionary course partakes of the essential characteristics of the plane in which they chance to be for the time being. If in an electronic plane, their shape is made up of electrons, and if they be revealed to any seer in trance or vision, it is in this electronic shape that we must see them. It is for this reason that, in our dreams or visions, we see one thing and give to it the interpretation of another. Some twenty-five years ago I saw the name of a gentleman written in stars on the sky. It was in a dream, and I thought the name was conspicuous enough for everyone on earth to see it. The gentleman at the time was an unknown personage, but to-day his name is a household word throughout the whole Muslim world. In those days also I was sleeping one night on the top of a house, with another gentleman beside me ; it was a summer night, with the Indian starry heaven over us ; and I saw in a dream that a great luminary had arisen in the middle of the sky. It was more lustrous than the moon, and bigger in size as well, but one could bear to gaze on it. All of a sudden a streak of light flashed from it and went towards the west ; then it shot downwards towards the earth. At the far limit of the horizon, where there

THE SUFI'S DIARY

was a piece of land full of thistle and thorn and all kinds of weeds the streak began to work rapidly up and down like the needle of a sewing machine ; and as it worked the weed began to burn, until a great portion of the land has become cleared of the weed. Then the streak shot back and was merged again into that luminous ball, from which it presently flashed again, this time towards the eastern horizon, where was another island patch, as it were, full of similar weeds and rank growth. The streak began to work again in the same way as it had done in the west. The scene was very fascinating, and I could not help patting the gentleman beside me to share my enjoyment of the wonderful sight. In my dream I awakened him, and he also rejoiced at the sight. Then I asked him what was the time. He consulted his watch and said it was 2 A.M. The dream left me, and I was wide awake with some words on my lips which ran thus : " The gardener has come, and he would cut all the trees which bear no fruit and burn them." Now I actually did awaken the gentleman and I actually did ask him the time. It was the same as he had told me in the dream. This signified to me that the rest of the dream was also a reality. I knew what it meant, but I am afraid I cannot disclose it in these pages. It referred to a great event, far-reaching in its consequences. The utmost I can say is that the event which I saw in the form of the lustrous streak flashing from the luminary in the sky, twenty-eight years ago, took nineteen years to appear on our plane, in its very, very earliest stage. Perhaps the event was at that time in the starry land, and being there it appeared to me in that shape. Had it been on another plane, it would have assumed a shape peculiar to that other plane.

The Muslim Sufis have written voluminous books on the subject, based upon the experience of generations dealing with the interpretation of visions and

ISLAMIC REVIEW

dreams. To resume the subject, our physical body, with the mind in it, has been evolved out of electronic complexity. If we were able to pass through the various processes of purification and refinement, it is just as possible for the earthly components of the body to become dead, that is to say, inactive and inoperative, which, being done, the electric portion in the body will become the freer in its activities with the mind as ruler of our human electrical frame, will it be surprising if we work things which appear wonders and miracles in the eyes of others ?

Dead matter begins to move if we charge it with electricity, but we have to procure a battery for the purpose. On the other hand, electricity is in us, and if we could use it in the same way as we use the electricity in a battery, it would be no impossible thing for the touch of Moses to make a rod move like a serpent. A man lately dead may come to animation for a while and stand and move, if a Jesus or a Muhammad, with his earthly nature sublimated into an electric nature, touches the corpse. Those who were brought to life by the prophetic touch, as we read in the sacred books of different religions, Hebrew, Muslim and Christian, received their re-animation only for a short time. It was the electricity of the body of the miracle-worker that worked the wonder. Some may assert that certain of the dead people restored to life by certain prophets lived a long life subsequently. History is silent on the subject. Moreover, the subjects of the miracles, I mean the persons who were brought to re-animation, possibly did not die, though for all purposes they seem to have become dead. In such cases the seemingly dead person, when revived, could live for a long time.

People in the West nowadays are much taken up by clairaudience, clairvoyance and the like. These are mere playthings. For some few moments the earthly elements in a person become inoperative

THE SUFI'S DIARY

for causes unknown to him, and therefore automatically, as it seems to him, he sees or hears things under normal conditions of life. It is a proof of higher capabilities in him which he ought to cultivate. This is his heritage, and he must find out the means whereby he may raise the crop and claim the harvest. Divine economy has granted these proofs of occult powers in man at a juncture in the history of the Western countries, when materialism has well-nigh killed all faith in the higher aspirations of humanity. Similarly, belief in the life after death had become dead in this part of the world, and that meant ultimately, death to morality and religion; but Providence came to our help, and enabled some of the staunchest advocates of materialistic science to see with their naked eye some of the denizens of the world beyond the grave, the main object of such revelation being to enable men to believe in the life after death, and thus to prepare and qualify them to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, which they can only do through the grave and gate of death. But alas! the experience in the case of the Western world has proved to be the experience which the Muslim Sufis dread—that of the Lure and the Pitfall. The people here have taken up with séances and spirit visits. To some of them it became a religion, and to others a profession. Swindling and cheating came in its train. The so-called mediums began to make a living by holding séances—I know there are some genuine mediums, and my remarks do not apply to them—some of them, indeed, are personally known to me, and I believe in their experience, though I may differ with their conclusions. But I wish that the so-called mediums could add a little knowledge to what we already possess as to the mystic side of human nature,

Before I go further, I should like to remove any wrong impression which my writings may leave in the mind of a Muslim Sufi, if any of them be among

ISLAMIC REVIEW

the number of my readers. To make the subject intelligible to the Western inquirer, I have referred to the electronic complexity of the human body and its evolution from electrons. Muslim belief, based on the Qur-án, goes further than electronic condition in tracing not only human origin, but that of the universe. It is “*nur*” of Allah, out of which the whole universe arose. The English word “light,” which we have to use in translating the Arabic word “*nur*,” does not really suggest the same idea, but it comes near to it. God made us of His own “*nur*” —“light.” It became clothed with thousands of coverings when it assumed earthly form. The “*nur*” had to pass into and through various stages before it became clothed in the human frame and made itself observable in the form of consciousness. This is our starting-point on the human plane. We have to sublimate animal consciousness into cosmic consciousness which borders on the Divine consciousness. If mind, allied to the human body, gives rise to animal consciousness, it will, in course of time, become evolved into cosmic consciousness, when its physical coverings will be refined into what I may call the covering of “*nur*.” Mind, a great creative agency, with the body of light around it and with all its earthly elements dead or dormant, could ascend even to the seventh heaven if it so desired, could see things at a distance of thousands of miles in a moment of time, could hear and talk over unimaginable spaces and could do all other wonders. These phenomena I have explained on a materialistic basis, I may say, to a certain extent. It is possible and within the bounds of human attainment. No wonder, then, if Muhammad, in his famous night ascension, could travel through seven heavens in the twinkling of an eye, and note some of the things therein. The earthly elements in the body of the Prophet which hampered the activities of the “*nur*” (“light”) body in him,

THE SUFI'S DIARY

became inoperative for a time. The "nur" resumed the rapidity of its original movement. It could travel millions of miles in the same way, I may say, as the light of the sun does in reaching the earth, the only difference between the two being that the latter does not possess mind in the evolved state in which it was in the body of Muhammad. On the next day, after the night of his ascension, his enemies, when they heard of it, came to him to test his veracity. In his night ascension, he had gone first from Mecca to Jerusalem, where he met the spirits of all the Prophets, and then he ascended the heavens. He had never in his life been to Jerusalem, and here was a chance for his enemies to test him, as some of them had visited that place. Abu Sufyan, one of the Meccan chiefs and an implacable enemy of the Prophet, called upon Muhammad and asked him to give some description of the remains of the Temple of Solomon, requesting him to count the pillars of the place, thinking by his success or otherwise in so doing, to gauge the credibility of his narrative of the night ascent. The Prophet says, as we read, that the Temple, in its then existing condition, appeared before his eyes when the question was put to him by Abu Sufyan. The rest was a matter of course. He actually saw the thing before him, and could not help being accurate in his description. Muhammad's mind, with its light or electric garment around it, could go where it wanted to at once.

It has recently come within scientific ken that every organism is built up of the same material; trees, animals and men have the same elements and atoms as ingredients of their respective bodies, and yet the said three species of organisms are quite separate and distinct from each other. Minerals as well have the same component elements. These ingredients undergo a peculiar process of growth, when in the vegetable kingdom. Locomotion and

ISLAMIC REVIEW

consciousness appear in them when they assume the form of flesh and the fleshy elements in different proportions ; and, in a more refined form, they give birth to the human frame, with its consciousness, capable of wonderful growth. I leave aside other distinctive features. The ingredients in the tree are decidedly in a more refined form than in the mineral, and similarly the same when entering the animal frame become more refined still. A yet further refinement occurs in the human frame. The fact becomes clearer if we compare the brain congeries in different animals from the ape to the human. The matter is the same in the different brains, but the cells increase, which indicates refinement, so much so that the brains of educated people have more cells in them than those of uneducated men. An advanced mentality can detect slight shades of differences existing in things, while there is nothing of the sort discernible to an uncultivated mind. There has been a creation of new cells in the brain of the former, and that means further refinement.

If the refinement of elements can give them growth when they are in the vegetable kingdom, and locomotion and the initial stage of consciousness when they are in the animal frame ; and still further refinement create discretion, self-control and wonderful capability of growth in consciousness, is it impossible that a further refinement yet of the ingredients in the human frame may serve to enhance the power of any and every sense possessed by us ? The animal mind cannot keep pace with the human mind, though they consist of the same ingredients, the difference, of course, being the difference in refinement. The animal mind cannot look beyond the horizon of its vision, which again is confined to a very little distance, but the human mind, with its brain cells more and more refined, can pass into starry lands with the same ease as we walk in the streets of London. If it is true of mentality, why should it not be true of all other latent faculties ?

THINK OF YOUR OWN HOUSE

THINK OF YOUR OWN HOUSE

THE *Moslem World* for April contains a monthly prayer cycle with daily allotments for particular purposes. These are intended for Moslems of all shades and grades from rulers to peasants, men, women and children, from Arabia to Java and from Egypt to the Cape, for conversion to the Christian faith and for the Christian missions. This is excellent, but no mention is made of the need of prayer for success in mission work at home in England itself. Is there not ample need of prayer for success in missionary activity in this country? There are crying questions here that need adjustment. Poverty, vice, drunkenness and ignorance all are to be combated. The well-grounded belief that the people of this country have lost faith in Christianity and that the Church has little hold on the people is strongly borne out by statistics of church attendance. There is much more need of prayer and mission work in the slums of London and other large cities than there is in Moslem lands, where Christianity is not needed. It is always better to begin this sort of work at home. Father Bernard Vaughan remarked just before the Great War started: "If we ourselves have no clear idea of what the Christian revelation really is, then it is much better to leave the unfortunate heathen alone. One thing is certain, and it is this, that what with Christian doctrine, Christian morality and Christian ritual ever-shifting among non-Catholic missionaries, it is almost impossible for a Chinaman, a Japanese or a Mussulman to discover what Christianity really is." The opinion of the Bishop of Zanzibar (a missionary bishop himself) is: "At the present time, having regard to her exceedingly chaotic system of Truth, the Church of England is entirely unfit to send missionaries to heathen or Mohammedan lands." It is perhaps not out of place to suggest that this remark can also be applied to other Churches.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Prayers and success in mission work are much more needed in this country than abroad. It is better and more commendable to preach to those who do not believe in a God than to those who do, even if it be of a different faith.

A writer in *East and West* says: "It seemed as if he was to go to New Guinea to preach a religion to the black men that the white man did not want, and to win the savage to a faith that the civilized man ignored."

So far religion; but the prayer cycle, in addition, evinces the desire that the Moslem may be free from superstition. There is an abundance of superstition that needs to be eradicated in England without devoting attention to the Moslem. Shop windows contain a display of mascots and charms that are in common and general use, and in the country districts superstitious beliefs and practices are widely believed in even after 1900 years of Christianity; and on the Continent it is worse. Why not do away with the fetich trees in Belgium mentioned by J. C. A. Chalon in *Les arbres fetiches en Belgique?*

An item of the prayer cycle is that "British rule may not be used to strengthen Islam" in Nigeria. This is surely outside the legitimate sphere of missionary comment.

But why this comprehensive, all-inclusive effort to convert the "poor benighted" Moslem? Is it the desire to capture the newly awakened East, now that the West is seen to be lost ground, in the hope of recovering prestige? But it is a vain hope. The East is fully satisfied on the religious point. It is well informed as to the policy of the historical Christian Church, with its record of crimes and errors. As far as Africa is concerned, it is also satisfied, as travellers and statistics prove when they show that for thousands of Christian converts there are millions of Moslems, with every likelihood of being in a generation a Moslem continent.

FROM THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

The founders of the *Moslem World* have chosen an apt name for their magazine—perhaps in a prophetic sense—for Islam has all signs of being the coming world religion, and in that sense it will truly be a Moslem World.

R. LISSAN.

FROM THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

Moral Precepts.

Say : Come ! I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you : That you do not slay your children for fear of poverty. We provide for you and for them. And do not draw nigh to indecencies (vi. 152).

WORDS of wisdom revealed over thirteen centuries since, but intended, it would seem, more as a cure for the present-day evils. Of the multifarious moral corruptions that have sprung out of the modern civilization, materialistic and self-seeking as it is in its trend, the most alarming is that of the steady fall in the rate of procreation. Hundred and one devices have been made to avoid the multiplication of progeny. Without shame or shudder, these are studied and practised openly. Dr. Marie Stopes' *Wise Parenthood*¹ forms the decoration of many a maid and madam's library, if it does not form part of a bride's dowry. And small wonder that the threatening decline in birth-rate should have forced, in some countries, the adoption of counter measures on the part of the State to encourage the propagation of species. France, for instance, makes special State endowments for the purpose.

There are, in the main, two motives underlying this suicidal tendency of the age. There are those, and they are, unfortunately, in the majority, who think a married life would interfere with their free

¹ *Wise Parenthood*, by Dr. Marie Stopes, Professor of University College, London, deals chiefly with birth control.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

indulgence in promiscuous sex-intercourse. Thousands of human souls never see the light of the day on this account. They are offered, so to speak, as sacrifices to the demon of lust. Again, there are others who would not enter into matrimonial relations for fear that the procreation of children would mean additional expense, and consequently the curtailment of their own comforts. Avoidance of conception and abortion, in the case of married couples, is also prompted by either of the two motives. The detrimental effect of such a trend of things on society, at large, and the nationality concerned, in particular, is obvious enough.

The above-quoted verse of the Holy Qur-án strikes a death-blow at the very root of the evil. First of all it condemns the practice—deliberate waste of human seed—to be as heinous a crime as cold-blooded murder. The life thus nipped in the bud means an incalculable loss to the human race. Who knows what a great asset to mankind the wasted life might have turned out to be—perhaps a sweet poet, a great philosopher, or scientist, a fine artist and what not. Surely a crime of such far-reaching effect must not be indulged in with a light heart. Neither fear of lack of means nor the passion of lust should be allowed to have the better of us and lead us to evils of such disastrous consequences. Abstention from marriage, indulgence in promiscuous sex-intercourse, extirpation of seed in any form, is a crime of the blackest dye. Poverty should not stand in the way of our duty to our race in this respect. “We provide for you as well as for them,” the Holy Qur-án assures us. We must have no anxiety on that account. No soul comes into being but the Universal Providence undertakes to see to its needs. Does He not provide all our wants? The same beneficence will be forthcoming to provide for the coming ones.

M. Y. KHAN.

THE STORY OF THE PASSION

THE STORY OF THE PASSION AND ITS DATE

Substance of the sermon delivered by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN in the Mosque, Woking, on Easter Sunday.

WE Muslims do not believe in the theory of Divine Incarnation in man, but believe that God being the prototype of man, he has got in him all the Divine attributes in a potential form which, when worked out, bring forth the desired result of spiritual progress. According to the holy faith of Islam Divine communion is not attained by bringing down God to man in the sense of incarnation, but by man rising gradually towards God by spiritual progress and the purification of his life from all sensual desires and low motives. This is what we understand when we read in Genesis that man was made in the image of God. We are taught in the Holy Qur-án that man can bring to fruition all his latent faculties by closely following the footsteps of Divinely inspired men who walked humbly with the Lord; and are also told that Jesus was one of such inspired men who brought all his potentialities into actualities by imbuing himself with Divine attributes. Therefore we are expected to follow the example of such perfect men if we want to attain the state of Divine communion in this life. Everyone must work out his own way of spiritual progress, and this is what Jesus meant when he said that "each should bear his own cross." But curiously enough, the present-day Christianity comes with another story.

To-day, you know, is Easter Sunday, and on this day Jesus, we are told to believe, came out of his grave after his visit to hell for a couple of days. If you believe in the Passion story of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus, you are sure to get absolved of all your sin; this is what St. Paul and his followers teach to the world, but this is far beyond the comprehension of any sensible man. This theory of Faith and Hope is not in the least supported by any of

ISLAMIC REVIEW

the sayings of the revered Prophet Jesus, but, on the other hand, his teachings are all for *action* and not for empty belief: prayer, fasting and fulfilling of the commandments are the watchwords of the prophet. But human nature has always got the weakness of aspiring for something great without any exertion on its part. From time immemorial man has been in search of the philosopher's stone whereby to transmute all the baser metals into gold by its mere magic touch. But only recently science has proved beyond all doubt that there is no such stone in this earth capable of transmuting the cold black iron into the bright shining gold.

Though we have properly understood this truth in the material world, still we are not able to grasp the same in the spiritual world. In that sphere we want to enter into the Kingdom of God by simply pinning our faith to this dogma and that dogma without ourselves doing a bit of exertion. Is this not the lazy hankering after the philosopher's stone in our moral and spiritual world?

If our mere belief in a certain Passion story can take us to the goal of salvation, why should we give preference to the story of Jesus and Jesus alone and not to any other nursery tale of the same nature? The story of Jesus is not the only incident in the history of the world, and there have been many other stories of similar nature all over the world which are believed to be true by millions of people even to-day. If my empty belief in the Virgin-Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection can bring me the desired salvation, why should I not as well believe in the similar Babylonian mystery and hope for my salvation? The Passion play of Babylon has been in existence long, long before the birth of Christ, and was even enacted as a popular mystery drama in those days.

There are two Babylonian tablets belonging to the collection of cuneiform documents which have been discovered by the

THE STORY OF THE PASSION

German excavators, in 1903-4, at Kalah Shergat, the site of the ancient Assur. They belonged to the Library of Assur, formed in the ninth century B.C., or even earlier. They are, however, copies of still earlier Babylonian tablets.

From these tablets we are able to understand that the Passion story of Jesus is not the first of the kind known to man from the dawn of Creation. For the facility of our readers we shall quote the following from the January issue of the *Quest*, which is purely a Christian magazine:—

THE BABYLONIAN PASSION PLAY.

Bēl is taken prisoner.

Bēl is tried in the House on the Mount (the Hall of Justice).

Bēl is smitten (wounded).

Bēl is led away to the Mount.

Together with Bēl a malefactor is led away and put to death. Another, who is also charged as a malefactor, is let go, thus not taken away with Bēl.

After Bēl had gone to the Mount, the city breaks out into tumult, and fighting takes place in it.

Bēl's clothes are carried away.

A woman wipes away the heart's blood of Bēl flowing from a drawn-out weapon (? spear).

THE CHRISTIAN PASSION STORY.

Jesus is taken prisoner.

Jesus is tried in the House of the High Priest and the Hall of Pilate.

Jesus is scourged.

Jesus is led away to crucifixion on Golgotha.

Together with Jesus, two malefactors are led away and put to death. Another (Barabbas) is released to the people, and thus not taken away with Jesus.

At the death of Jesus, the veil in the temple is rent (Synopt.), the earth quakes, the rocks are rent asunder, the graves are opened, and the dead come forth into the holy city (Matt.).

Jesus' robe is divided among the soldiers (Synopt., John., cp. Ps. xxii. 18).

The lance-thrust in Jesus' side and outflow of water and blood (John). Mary Magdalene and two other women busy themselves with the (washing, and) embalming of the body (Mark, Luke).

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Bēl goes down into the Mount away from sun and light, disappears from life, and is held fast in the Mount as in a prison.

Guards watch Bēl imprisoned in the stronghold of the Mount.

A goddess sits with Bēl ; she comes to tend him.

They seek for Bēl where he is held fast. In particular a weeping woman seeks for him at the " Gate of Burial." When he is being carried away the same lamented : " O, my brother ! O, my brother ! "

Bēl is again brought back to life (as the sun of spring), he comes again out of the Mount.

His chief feast, the Babylonian New Year's festival in March at the time of the spring equinox, is celebrated also as his triumph over the powers of darkness (cp. the creation hymn " Once when on high " as the New Year's festival hymn.

Jesus, in the grave, in the rock tomb (Synopt.), goes down into the realm of the dead (1 Pet. iii. 19, Matt. xii. 40, Acts ii. 24, Rom. x. 17, " descent into hell " dogma).

Guards are set over the tomb of Jesus (Matt.).

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sit before the tomb (Matt., Mark).

Women, in particular Mary Magdalene, came to the tomb to seek Jesus where he is behind the door of the tomb. Mary stands weeping before the empty tomb because they have taken her Lord away (John).

Jesus' restoration to life, his rising from the grave (on a Sunday morning).

His festival, approximately at the spring equinox, is also celebrated as his triumph over the powers of darkness (cp. e.g. Col. ii. 15).

This is how the modern Christian Passion story compares with the old Babylonian mystery play. It is clear from this that a thousand years and more before the advent of Christ a story similar to that of this prophet was in existence in the old world which had a good deal to do with the belief of those people. Then where comes the superiority of Christianity which is always being proclaimed from the pulpit and the platform as being the only religion for our salvation ? Dear readers, I therefore want

ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

to draw your attention to the fact that empty belief in this story and that story will not bring you the necessary passport to enter into eternal life. That is all a nursery tale. Do not be led away by the supposed efficacy of the vicarious Atonement. The belief in the spiritual philosopher's stone will only be a chimera as it has proved to be in the field of science. Unless and until you are prepared to bear your own cross, or in other words, you are determined to put your own shoulders to the wheel of your spiritual progress you cannot reach the goal of perfect humanity. According to the faith of Islam, spiritual elevation is proportionate to the human evolution in this life, and therefore a man can attain salvation only to that degree to which his soul has been evolved by his own conduct of life.

Hence I request you all to aspire for that well-earned spiritual elevation rather than the vicarious Atonement which is said to be easily accessible by simply *pinning your empty belief* to the Passion story of an individual—Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth.

B. DAUD SHAH.

ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

By C. A. SOORMA, B.A.

BEFORE we discuss the relation of Islam to modern civilization and the position which it now holds among the great recognized religions of the world, it is necessary, first of all, to go back to the days before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and find out the state of things which existed then. A comparative study of history will reveal some very striking facts which will gradually develop into a study in contrasts which is of the greatest importance. Our next point will then be to find out whether Islam

ISLAMIC REVIEW

has been beneficial to humanity in general, whether it had and has an elevating influence on the development of human character, and whether its teachings are universal and in accordance with the laws of Dame Nature. With these aims in view, we shall therefore try to sketch briefly the history of Arabia before and after the advent of the Prophet.

Arabia during the pre-Islamic days was sunk into the lowest stage of civilization. It would be rather difficult to describe the awful superstition and idolatry which prevailed everywhere: the gross licentiousness in which the people of those days indulged, the innumerable crimes of infanticide and human sacrifices which were committed in the name of religion, the constant and perpetual warfare among the various tribes and the consequent—though inevitable—reduction of the population, the absence of any stable government leading to the prevalence of anarchism and criminal excesses, etc., are all solid facts borne out by history. Arabia was in a state of chaos, sin and darkness unprecedented in the history of any nation. The “House of Allah,” founded by their ancestor, Abraham, as a sign of the unity of the Almighty, was converted into a temple containing over three hundred idols and images, being the deities and the gods of the Arabs. The great and divine religions which Moses and Christ had brought down from Heaven had lost their original fidelity and purity, having been tainted with popular superstition and beliefs. People could hardly make any distinction between Virtue and Vice. Brutal, ferocious and savage roamed the nomadic Arab, with no object in life except to gratify his base and vile passions. In short, human society had become so corrupt that even a study of those times sends a chill of horror and loathing through every decent man. Such then was the state of Arabia when Muhammad—may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—expounded to

ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

the waiting people the message of the One true God in words pregnant with celestial fire. The dawn of a New Era was visible on the horizon. The day promised to bloom forth with fresh brilliance and vigour and to roll back the dark clouds which had for so long a time concealed the Heavenly Light from the sight of men! The day had come when the hand of the Great Reformer was once more to restore the long lost—though much cherished—Justice, Freedom, Atonement and Virtue!

Opposition, persuasion and even brutal force could not stem the tide of righteousness from flowing into the new channels of Purity, Unity and Brotherhood. It swept away all barriers, obstacles and impediments as a mountain-torrent sweeps away everything that lies in its way. Virtue had at last triumphed over Vice, and the forces of Good had ultimately put an end to those of Evil. Humanity was liberated from the grip of evil, and superstition, being scared away by the doctrines of Truth and Piety, took to wings and flew away for ever. Hard and fast came the revelations of the Almighty through His Messenger and Prophet, whose logical, reasonable and convincing arguments had at last opened the eyes of a degraded and corrupted nation. The Arabs awoke to the great realization that they had been asleep for centuries in the dark dungeons of ignorance and vice. Thus, the Holy Qur-án, the sacred Book of Allah, was revealed to humanity at a time when its need was most felt. It came *direct* through one man, and one alone—from one who lived in the broad daylight of history. The Gospel of Truth struck awe and terror through the hearts of men. Overcome by its irrefutable truths, its eloquence, elegance and magnificence, its purity and loftiness of thought, the Arab nation determined to atone for its past misdeeds and follies, with the result that at the time of the Holy Prophet's death the whole of Arabia had been converted to Islam.

Thus within the short space of a few years Arabia

ISLAMIC REVIEW

had undergone a marvellous change. Instead of atheism, deism and fanaticism, men began to worship the One true God, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient and the Omnipresent. Instead of autocracy and feudalism, it laid the foundation of the truest Democracy and Brotherhood, the like of which the world has never seen. Instead of the horrible and cruel treatment of women and children, men began to respect and love them. Instead of savages and brutes, the Arabs became the torch-bearers of science and culture. Instead of a nation split up into innumerable tribes and clans, they united and formed into a single vast nation, acquiring practically unlimited power and domination. Instead of a corrupted and a degraded society, it gave birth to a highly intellectual and moral society which at once became the wonder and admiration of the whole world.

This marvellous transformation from the depths of vice and ignorance to the heights of civilization and progress was due, no doubt, to the Commandments, Precepts and Injunctions contained in the Qur-án. Islam gave a new impetus to culture and civilization, as it stimulated and encouraged the pursuit of scientific studies to an almost unlimited extent. Islam is proud of the fact that it has produced such philosophers and scientists as Assamah, Aboo Oosman, Alberunee, Abu Ali Ibn Seena or Avicenna, the great physician and philosopher, Ibn Rushud or Averroes of Cordova, the chief commentator on Aristotle, Ibn Bujja or Avempace, Al Ghazzalii, and a host of others. The Arabs are the undisputed inventors and founders of chemistry. Medicine and pharmacy were greatly improved by the early Muslims. Euclid was translated and preserved from the Greek by the Arabs. Astronomy, biology and physics were greatly advanced by the Muslims. Even aviation was attempted by Abul Cassim, the famous inventor, who was unfortunately killed in one of his numerous attempts at

ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

flying. He was a martyr to science! History has recorded in letters of gold the patronage of the Muslims for learning and culture. The Abdur Rahmans of Spain, Abu Jafar Almansoor and Haroon Alrasheed of the Abbaside Dynasty, have left behind them on the pages of history the services they have rendered to humanity and civilization. From Granada in the West to the walls of China in the East Muslim culture and civilization spread with amazing rapidity. The fame that they have left behind them in their works can never be consigned to the limbo of oblivion through our own ignorance and folly. I cannot do better here than quote the words of Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, who says in his *Islam : Her Moral and Spiritual Value* :—

“ But apart from these weighty considerations the attitude of Europe towards Islam should be one of eternal gratitude, instead of base ingratitude and forgetfulness. Never to this day has Europe acknowledged in an honest and whole-hearted manner the great and everlasting debt she owes to Islamic culture and civilization. Only in a lukewarm and perfunctory way has she recognized that when, during the dark ages, her people were sunk in feudalism and ignorance, Muslim civilization under the Arabs reached a high standard of social and scientific splendour, that kept alive the flickering embers of European society from utter decadence.

“ Do not we, who now consider ourselves on the topmost pinnacle ever reached by culture and civilization, recognize that had it not been for the high culture, the civilization and intellectual as well as social splendour of the Arabs and the soundness of their school-system, Europe to this day would have sunk in the darkness of ignorance? . . .

“ Have we forgotten that Moslem liberality was in striking contrast with the then intolerant state of Europe? Have we forgotten that the Califate arose in the most degenerate period of Rome and Persia, also that the greater part of Europe lay under the black and dark clouds of barbarism? . . .

“ Is the great work that they have done and the fame they have left behind them in their books to be consigned to the limbo of oblivion by an ungrateful because antipathetic Europe? It cannot be that already we have lost sight of the amazing intellectual activity of the Moslem world during the earlier part of the Abbaside period more especially? It cannot be that we have quite forgotten the irreconcilable loss that was inflicted on

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Arabian literature and the world at large by the wanton destruction of thousands of books that was prompted by Christian bigotry and fanaticism? It cannot be surely said of Christian Europe that for centuries now she has done her best to hide her obligations to the Arabs. Yet most assuredly obligations such as these are far too sacred to lie much longer hidden! Let Europe—Christendom rather—confess and acknowledge her fault. Let her proclaim to her own ignorant masses and to the world at large the ingratitude she has displayed and the eternal debt she owes to Islam she no longer despises.”

These are the concluding words of this eminent critic, and we have quoted this at some length in order to show that the Muslims are not as ignorant as we are supposed to be, and that had it not been for Islamic culture and civilization, Europe—which bitterly hates Islam—would still have been in the depths of ignorance. Major Glyn has evidently no axe of his own to grind, and what he says is, of course, based on an exhaustive study of the history of the rise and development of Islamic civilization. His attitude—frank, honest and outspoken as it is—is of course hateful to the bigoted Christian, but I can admit that there are a few—very few indeed—who still possess enough sense of right and wrong to have the courage of their convictions. We congratulate the Major on his sincerity and sense of fairness.

It is a matter of no little surprise to many non-Muslims that such a *new* faith as Islam could achieve such greatness and distinction in so short a time. No explanation appears to them to be satisfactory. It is our duty, therefore, to offer them a solution in order that they may have a clearer conception of Islam and its teachings.

In the first place, it must clearly be noted that Islam is *not* a new faith. It existed since the creation of the universe. All the great prophets of Allah such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others were all Muslims. Their teachings were exactly those of Muhammad, the last of the Prophets. Muhammad did not bring the message of a *new* religion, but his

ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

mission was to restore the real religion of Islam to its former purity and fidelity. He corrected the misunderstandings of men after the death of Moses and the recall of Jesus. Islam, therefore, may be termed Judaism *plus* proselytism and Christianity *minus* the teachings of St. Paul. Obviously, then, Islam is not a *new* faith, but a faith which has been handed down to us since the time of Adam.

It logically follows that a religion which has been successively taught by all the Prophets at various times of the world's history—taught the same fundamental truths, the same precepts and the same principles—must be a *universal* one. Islam claims to be a universal faith, for Muhammad was a universal reformer. His mission was to the universe, to mankind. His laws are not his own laws. They are free from human manipulations. They are Divine laws, the laws of Nature as embodied in the Holy Qur-án. Islam tries to *regulate* Nature, but not go *against* Nature. Islam is based upon all that goes to make up human nature, and hence its laws have been formulated with a view to suit human nature as met with in different castes, races and nations of the world. They are the outcome of extreme deliberation and careful study, and hence they pertain to no one sect, nation or people. I may here be allowed to quote the opinion of Edmund Burke, the great English orator and statesman, who says :

“ The Mohammedan law is binding upon all, from the crowned head to the meanest subject. It is a law interwoven with a system of the wisest, the most learned and the most enlightened jurisprudence that *ever* existed in the world.”

Praise from a person like Burke is praise indeed !

The Qur-án, apart from being one of the finest literary achievements of the whole world, is also a complete code of moral, civil, military and social laws. Abounding as it does in exquisite language and historical allusions, the Qur-án is, at the same time,

ISLAMIC REVIEW

a daily code of conduct for the guidance of every Muslim. His actions are determined, judged and directed by it. Whatever he does must be in accordance with the injunctions of the Qur-án. That the Muslims consider the laws as formulated in the Qur-án as infallible is obvious from the fact that though thirteen centuries have elapsed since they were first expounded, the Qur-án has not been subjected to the slightest change. It remains to this day word for word, vowel for vowel, as it came through the lips of the Prophet of Allah, and it will ever remain the same. They are free from human interpolations and interference—a fact which cannot be said with equal or even partial truth of the other sacred books of different religions. Muhammad claimed it as his “Standing Miracle,” and a miracle indeed it is!

This air of permanence and infallibility which the Qur-án exercises over every Muslim, gives an *added* force to the laws of Islam. It develops human character by making every follower of Islam realize his own responsibility. This moral consciousness creates a sense of righteousness which is considered by Islam as being the highest type of virtue. Islam enjoins upon its followers to do the right thing however unpleasant or difficult it may be. Sincerity of thought and action is considered by Islam as being the necessary means for salvation. This sense of duty and obligation, of simplicity and fidelity, produces a healthy effect in moulding our characters. Patience, courage and perseverance, and, above all, an unshakable faith in the Creator, make the Muslim a truly healthy specimen of manhood. Islam is spiritual. It always appeals to a man's higher and finer senses. It creates in him a sense of regard for the good things in life. It asks him to compare—the Qur-án always does so—the things of this universe, their impermanence and hollowness, with the everlasting nature of righteousness and morality. Tolera-

ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

tion towards others produces in him a sense of amicability and fellowship without which—so declares the Qur-án—no one can ever hope to enter the Paradise. As a citizen of the world, the Muslim has shown that he possesses “camaraderie” to a remarkable extent, and which has endeared him wherever Destiny has guided his steps.

As we are just now concerned with the position of Islam among the great recognized religions of the world, it will be our duty, first of all, to investigate the chief outstanding features of the present-day civilization, its merits and abuses; and finally, to determine how far Islam can claim as a world force for the guidance and salvation of mankind.

“Now that the great combat of nations is finishing, men are anxiously looking round for some rule of conduct which will result in harmony and peace, which will bring together mankind instead of further estrangement, which will eliminate points of discord, and tend to weld humanity into a composite whole,”

declares an English Muslim. He goes on to say :

“Men who have daily faced death on the battlefield are certainly not content to be put off with fine phrases, and ideals which are not workable in everyday life. Men to-day want something definite, something practicable, something possible of realization. . . . To-day it is the people who think, the people who investigate, the people who demand spiritual as well as material satisfaction. . . . The age demands that whatever is produced for the mass of humanity at large shall be the truth, plain, unvarnished; that it shall be something that tends to enlighten, to uplift, to strengthen the human soul. This is a period when all men are looking very carefully into their inner selves and are probing the depth of their convictions.”

We could quote some more passages from the writings of this learned writer, but for our present needs we think that the above quotation is quite sufficient. The late war has wrought a marvellous change. It has revolutionized all the branches of human activity, and the havoc and horrors which are but the aftermath of this grim and brutal struggle have shaken the very foundations of modern civilization. The

ISLAMIC REVIEW

much-vaunted civilization of the West is in the crucible of test. So far the indications have been far from being either satisfactory or reassuring. The hopes which men have pinned on things as being trustworthy have now been shattered to the ground. We stand to-day on the threshold of a New Era, a new age which will liberate humanity from the awful clutches of evil and vice. Gone is the proud and haughty attitude of men of "Kultur." Gone are the peace and rest which we have enjoyed so long, and gone are the follies born of false faith and security. The artificialities of a generation reared and nourished in the cradle of materialism and utilitarianism lie exposed and naked—hideous in all their wretchedness. Faced by the mighty problems of rehabilitation and reconstruction, the world is eager and anxious to employ every means that lies in its power for a speedy regeneration of mankind.

Religion, which was considered by many to be, more or less, a product of geographical conditions necessary for the guidance of a set of men, has now earned for itself a *new* meaning, an *added* force! Pessimism, which is the child of materialism, has lost its hold on humanity, and now hides its face from the dazzling brightness of the Dawn of Truth. Men are struggling to realize the full significance of this message of delivery from the unbearable burden of Imperialism and Capitalism. And it is here that Islam, that glorious monument of Ideality and Humanity, of peace and happiness, of science and culture, of promise and faith, stands out as a great Reclaimer and Restorer, holding high the torch that lights and guides the way to "The Land of Promise"!

"Islam" we call this great force, but what does it *really* mean? What is its significance? Has it any force behind it, or is it merely the chimerical dream of an over-zealous reformer? What *is* Islam? "Islam" really means "submission to the will of God." Its message is that of *peace* and *safety*. With

ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

its noble message of the Brotherhood of Mankind, its appeal is to all! Rational, as rational can be, simple, as simple can be, Islam has once more attracted the attention of thinking minds who, having discarded their garments of Prejudice for those of Truth and Sincerity, now behold it as a great *unifier* embracing all, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. With its truly democratic institutions, natural laws and abiding faith, Islam is gradually evolving a "League of Nations" based on the supreme gifts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. To a war-worn world shaken to its very foundations and giving rise to an intolerant state of dissatisfaction and uneasiness, where greed and avarice has jeopardized man's sense of right and wrong, Islam comes as a blessing to guide and lead the wayward and the ignorant. It offers an antidote against the poisonous doctrines of an anarchical system like Bolshevism. It is the ultimate refuge of all the homeless, the hopeless and helpless. Whoever enters its fold finds contentment and peace, for it is based on all that ennobles the human mind. Man desires to abolish wars in future, but unless he gives up building armaments there *will* be wars. You cannot have peace—real peace—by "robbing Peter to pay Paul." You cannot restore humanity to that state of perfection by perfecting the very instruments which are responsible and instrumental in bringing about his own annihilation. You cannot claim to be civilized by committing those outrages which are against humanity. You cannot attain the much-desired "Millennium" by pursuing a policy of retaliation. You are, in fact, as much a savage as the prehistoric—perhaps more so—because of your powers for and ingenuity in making deadly engines of destruction. Therefore, let Islam show you the right way to eternal peace; let it proclaim itself as the one great *unifying* force. Let it show you the right solution for bleeding humanity. Let it open your eyes so that you can judge what is best for you.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

As a world-force, then, Islam promises to breathe a new life into the flickering embers of human society !

Out there, in a little city, on the edge of a mighty desert there lies in eternal sleep One who, thirteen centuries ago, sounded the Bell of God in tones pregnant with celestial fire, One who laid the foundation of an Empire that stretched from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific, One who is the Saviour of mankind, and One to whom we owe a debt of gratitude which can never be fulfilled ! Though in the peaceful calmness of death he lies, yet the great Spirit which conquered the most degenerate nation of its time is still hovering over us, trying to teach us, infuse in us the same old spirit of righteousness and truth. With true prophetic vision he foresaw the helplessness and confusion of an age like this, and he amply provided us beforehand with all those fundamental elements of true faith and steadfast belief which constitute the mighty structure, the noble edifice of Islam—an edifice bearing witness to the magnificence and grandeur of a faith followed by at least two hundred millions of men. Muhammad is his name ! He was great—a great prophet among God's great men. But to us, he was the greatest of them all ! May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him !

Out of the shadows of the past and the gloom of the ages emerges the brightness and happiness of the future ! Out of the deep silence of the days gone by comes the clarion call of days to be ! Out of the vast expanse of Time and Space, the memory of the Past beckons us with an unerring hand ! It reminds us of the greatness that is no more, and yet it inspires us to strive for the future that is in store for us ! May we be worthy of this great trust which Islam lays on our shoulders ! May we be conscious of the true value of this universal faith ; and lastly, may we realize that it is up to us to see that it develops and

TABLE TALK

fructifies! May God, in His unbounded Goodness, make us worthy to be called Muslims! Amen.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait!

↑

TABLE TALK

The Language for Religion—Arabic Words and Theology.

If articulated sounds, by which I mean the words which are the component parts of language, are intended primarily to convey the mind of a speaker to his hearers, such purpose was never so well served as by Arabic. Arabic words are extraordinarily eloquent and rich in significance. Their meanings are, as often as not, self-evident, as one or two illustrations, taken almost haphazard, will show. "Kitab," for example, is the Arabic word for "book." The word has got "kataba" as its root, which means "to write," "to collect," "to sew," to "close," so if we had no notion of what the word "kitab" meant, yet the several meanings of the root word will show that something written, then collected, stitched and bound will make a book. In other languages the equivalent words have nothing of this peculiar and comprehensive idea—the sense of logical development, we might call it. Again, "bait" is an Arabic word for the English "house." As a verb, it means "to spend the night," "to marry," "to brood over a design." We may pass the daytime wherever we like, but we are at home for the night if it is spent in the house. Moreover, marriage needs a house, and it is thus that almost all Arabic words may be said to speak for themselves. Such is not the case in non-Arabic languages. Words in them are dumb things, possessing for the most part no meaning beyond that which society chooses to give them. The Arabs, after all, are not presumptuous

Page or pages missing here.

We hope to supply later.

TABLE TALK

mind to us, even had the words themselves remained unchanged; the language was constantly in a process of change. It is an admitted fact that no language which was ever used by any teacher or prophet is in existence to-day.

The Arabic of the Hedjaz, however, the language in which the Qur-án was revealed, is the one and only exception to this otherwise universal rule of change. Moreover, as lexicons of Arabic were written by the generation immediately following on that of the Prophet himself, we are in the possession of the meaning of every word used in the Qur-án, or by Muhammad himself in his sayings, the identical and precise meanings which it received in his own days.

But in to-day's talk I am speaking of Arabic from another standpoint, on which is based its claim to be regarded as the "Language of Religion." It is the function of religion to teach certain truths which are embodied in certain concepts, which in popular language are called "beliefs and tenets of religion." While in other religions it is necessary to study sacred literature and the commentaries thereon, or to sit at the feet of scholars and teachers in order to appreciate tenets and truths of a particular faith, in the case of Islam, the religion taught by the Qur-án and Muhammad, you have only to study the meaning of the word used by the book and the prophet. Every religion, for example, speaks of some future bliss in the life after death awaiting those who do righteous deeds. Heaven is the English word and *Jannat* is the Arabic equivalent. While in order to arrive at the specific Christian signification of the word one has to study the Bible, or the works of some Christian divine, the etymological meaning of the Arabic word gives us at once a clear idea of the Muslim Heaven without reference to the Qur-án or any Muslim theologian. The rest is a matter of detail which can be studied

ISLAMIC REVIEW

in the Muslim literature, but even this we read and interpret subject always to the etymological meaning of the word itself. In other words, you can understand Islam, its teachings and its truths simply by studying certain words used by the Qur-án to convey those truths. Now I take them one by one.

Muslim Conception as to Creation.

We believe the universe to be a created thing and not eternal. The Arabic word for universe, or world, is "Kaun," which literally means "a thing created" and not eternal. It also means a thing which came into existence under the order of "Beic" —to say. Someone said "Be" and it "became," referring to the Muslim belief that the Creator was first and the universe came into existence at His command.

The strongest reason which has been advanced by Theists to prove the existence of God is the purposeful nature of the whole universe, wherein everything has got some use and serves some ascertained need, thus showing design, and consequently inferring the Designer, the Creator. In other words, every constituent of the universe is a thing in need, and therefore desired.

The whole reasoning hinges upon the assumption that everything in Nature is needed and desired. The Arabic word for "thing" is "shai," the root of which means "to wish," or "to desire." "Shai," therefore, etymologically, means a thing needed, desired and wished for.

Again, the Arabic word for the universe is "Alam," the root of which means "to know," or "knowledge." It is clear that all human knowledge is concerned with the universe, i.e. Adam is the object of knowledge. All our sciences consist of the knowledge of those laws under which the different constituent parts of the universe are working. Knowledge im-

TABLE TALK

plies law. Thus the Arabic word for the universe implies knowledge and law. Think upon these three Arabic words used in the Qur-án to mean the universe, *Kawn*, a thing created and coming into existence at a definite command, *Shai* (a constituent of the universe) meaning a thing needed and desired, *Alam* (universe) to which all our knowledge belongs, and you understand the Muslim belief as to the emanation of the universe—that is to say, it is a created thing, created by someone to serve a certain purpose, that it is the source of all human knowledge and that everything in it works under laws. In these three words you have the best of weapons, as I said before, wherewith to meet Atheism.

The word used in the Qur-án for the Deity surpasses in its beauty and excellence all equivalents in any other tongue. *Allah*, in the Qur-án, stands for God. Allah, according to the best supported opinions, is a proper name applied to “the Being Who exists necessarily by Himself,” comprising all the attributes of perfection. The word Allah is not applied to any being except the only true God ; and it comprises all the excellent names, and the Arabs, moreover, never gave the name Allah to any of their numerous idols. In this respect it has no equivalent in any other language, and it may be for this very reason that Muslim writers often use the word Allah in place of God in their writings, seeing that the word “God” possesses no such exclusive application, inasmuch as it is and has been constantly used for things other than the Supreme Deity. So with the word Deity itself. The Persian word *Khuda* for God is applied to men as well. This is the case of every word used in the various languages of the world to mean the “Adored One.”

If Monotheism in its purest form may be taken as the true religion, the Allah is the one word which can preserve the true sense of Monotheism ; more

ISLAMIC REVIEW

especially that one meaning of the word Allah—the Being Who exists necessarily by Himself. This meaning is not conveyed or even suggested by any other corresponding word in any other language, while it is, if I may be allowed to say so, the corner-stone of all Divine attributes.

Conception of God.

All religions converge on a common principle. Differences arise from the varying conceptions of God and His attributes which different religions teach, contradicting each other. The religion of the Church in the West—the Catholic Church—claims to have come with a new Epiphany, revealed by the Blood at Calvary, i.e. God suffering punishment for man's sins out of His love for man. To put it shortly, essential differences in different faiths arise from the correspondingly different beliefs as to the Divine attributes. Islam differs from every other religion in its conception of the Divine attributes. If the world could continue to come to an agreement as to its conception of God, the rest would be a matter of course, and all other differences would disappear. But, to resume our theme, even in this respect, Arabic has a notable superiority over all other languages. While to understand the various conceptions of God in the religions of the world you must read theological books, or listen to the divines of different creeds, in the case of the Qur-án, all that is necessary is to select a few words purporting to contain the attributes of God and consult some good lexicon, and then in a flash you appreciate the whole Muslim faith on the point. Out of the ninety-nine words used in the Qur-án to designate the various attributes of the Most High, I will take here only four, summed up in the first line of the opening chapter. They are comprehensive enough in their significance to include all the rest. In a way they give us the whole purport

TABLE TALK

of Islam, pointing out at the same time the chief points of difference between other religions and ourselves. These four attributes are as follows :—

RABB, RAHMAN, RAHIM, MALIK.

I deal with them seriatim.

RABB.—The word literally means to create, to foster, to bring up, to regulate, to accomplish, to complete, to bring a thing from its crudest form to that of its highest perfection. I find in the book of Raghīb, the Qur-án lexicographer, the following :

“RABB signifies the fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion.” The idea of evolution is only a recent discovery. It began with Darwinism. Herbert Spencer developed it and brought it nearly to its present state. It is now generally believed that everything has within itself manifold capacities, and is only awaiting favourable circumstances to approach to its full development. It passes through various evolutionary stages, receiving nutrition for growth at every stage, and eventually achieves its final fruition. If this is what we understand of evolution, then the meaning of the word Rabb, given by Raghīb seven centuries ago, sums up the whole theory of evolution. “Hence Rabb is the author of all existence, Who has not only given to the whole creation its means of nourishment, but has also beforehand ordained for each a sphere of capacity, and, within that sphere, provided the means by which it continues gradually to attain its goal of perfection.” We find this idea of regulating and arranging in the meaning of Rabb. It leads us to think that He works in accordance with the laws made by Him, and that everything coming from Him is regular and law-abiding. The very idea suggested by the meaning of the word Rabb that I have given above, i.e. to bring things to perfection, also suggests that things in their incep-

ISLAMIC REVIEW

tion are potentially perfect, and are tending to perfection. This goes against the belief of "Adam's Fall," which implies the lapsing, going from perfection to degeneracy. Here I do not enter into polemics. My main object is to show that the Arabic word Rabb does not allow any room for the theory of the Fall of Adam. In short, one who accepts his God to be Rabb is a believer in evolution, and cannot believe in the Fall of Adam.

That the word Rabb comprehends the word Ab (Father), made much of in Christian theology, is obvious. The father may be the physical author of his child, be responsible for certain aspects of his education, but Rabb looks after the child in his every stage of growth, from the first to the last, embryonic as well as others. The word also suggests to us a course of conduct, by which we may reach our perfection. If the Creator has put in us capacities for perfection, and all His workings are under the laws prescribed by Him, it clearly shows that if we wish to reach our goal it is for us to discover certain laws and to follow them. It also indicates that we are capable of observing the law, and our success or salvation from troubles depends upon our observance of the law. It is in this respect principally that a Muslim differs from a Christian. If to sin means to violate the law, then sin, in nature, means incapability to observe the law. Thus a belief in sin by nature regards man as incapable of observing the law, but the word Rabb, as I have explained it above, gives the lie direct to any such theory.

(To be continued.)

THE GOSPEL OF FELICITY

The New Epiphany—Islam—Christianity.

"Do not slacken nor grieve; for you are the triumphant ones, provided you are believers."—THE HOLY QUR-ÁN.

HEREIN lies a soothing consolation for a true believer in the Holy Book, a most cheering tidings for a

THE GOSPEL OF FELICITY

Muslim. Should we turn a new leaf this very day, shake our slumber off, make the best use of our time, energies, and whatever money we still possess, this very day shall fortune strew roses on our way. Wealth, power, pomp and glory shall follow like a shadow in the wake of our ACTIONS. Whereas the Holy Qur-án speaks of the Divine attributes which were known to the world even before the advent of Islam, it also introduces quite a new conception of God. The world looked upon the Divine Being as merciful, but was utterly ignorant of a particular form of His mercy known as *rahmaniyyat* in Islamic phraseology. This is how this attribute of God, for the first time expounded by Islam, manifests itself: A certain man is anxious to achieve a particular object, but does not possess the necessary material—the means wherewith to attain his goal. He is at a loss what to do, but does not keep listless. He exerts himself, and as soon as he takes the first step in that direction, Divine mercy comes to his succour, providing the requisite means. As he moves on towards his goal, the Divine Hand at every stage brings him the needful. This is the working of the Divine attribute *rahmaniyyat*—attribute that comes to the help of the MAN OF ACTION. The first step must be taken by man himself, in order to deserve the manifestation of this attribute. No matter whatever our lack of means and resources, the RAHMAN guarantees the supply of everything necessary, *provided* we take a firm stand on the field of ACTION, move about our limbs and keep up and doing. The Holy Qur-án has laid the world under a deep debt of obligation by declaring God to be RAHMAN—the Provider of material to the man of action. This new thought, this fresh outlook on God's ways, has given a great impetus to man's powers. According to this new philosophy of life, man's POWER OF ACTION is his sole capital. It comes to cheer up the idle pessimist, urges him to

ISLAMIC REVIEW

be up and make use of his God-given powers, which he possesses as surely as anybody else, and the hand of RAHMAN will itself crown his efforts with success.

Christian theology has also a New Epiphany to boast of. Islamic *rahmaniyyat* connotes the mercy of God, which showers on man, not as a reward that he has earned, but as a spontaneous blessing. But Christianity knows no such unearned mercy, especially when there is the demand of justice to be satisfied. In such cases God must first arrange to meet the requirements of justice and then manifest His mercy. This novel moral of God was not revealed to Jesus. Nor is it traceable in the Acts of the Apostles. It finds, no doubt, a dim reflection in the writings of the semi-philosopher and semi-Rabbi Paul, who, in fact, is the real founder of so-called Christianity. This new conception of the Divine Being, that His mercy cannot be shown without compensation, was really invented to legalize the dogma of atonement. Adam committed sin. He as well as his children must be visited with punishment. Divine justice called for retribution. Divine mercy was, however, anxious for man's redemption. But mercy could not be exercised unless the demand of justice were satisfied. Hence God, in His love, sent His own beloved son to earth, who was crucified to atone for the sins of others. This is the whole story.

It is astonishing that such stuff should find a place in a system of theology. God, the Merciful, and exacting the price of His mercy—two irreconcilable ideas! Mercy ceases to be mercy when shown in return for something. To meet a single act on man's part with a hundredfold of reward is surely mercy; but it is no mercy to forgive a sin after retribution. Whether the penalty is paid by the offender himself or some one else on his behalf makes no difference. So far as the forgiver is con-

THE GOSPEL OF FELICITY

cerned, he has shown no mercy, having visited the particular offence with the proportionate measure of punishment

Nor is this Christian myth of atonement even an act of justice on the part of God. Administration of justice takes for granted the existence of two contending parties, apart from the judge, who decides between them. But where the case is between the offender and the offended, there is no occasion for the display of justice. Punishment in such cases, meted out by the latter, is not an act of justice, but of revenge. Sin is committed by man against God, punishing which would amount to avenging personal wrong, rather than justice. The writer has dealt with this aspect of the question at full length in his work *A Word on the Attributes of God*. Suffice to point out here that it is no New Epiphany, as claimed. The same story, as old as man himself—to bring about reconciliation between man and an angry Deity through sacrificial blood. The sophistical reasoning that what man owed to God the latter paid out of His own pocket, is a ludicrous attempt to disguise this pagan doctrine in a different garb. And what is the effect of such a conception on the morals of man? If man must model himself after the Divine pattern, this will hardly mean an enviable addition to the moral assets of humanity. It deals a death-blow to the highest form of virtue—benevolence—which is shown without expectation of reward. The influence of this doctrinal principle on the Western mind is patent enough. It knows no such thing as doing good without return. "Give and take" is the principle on which all affairs are conducted. Small wonder that the votaries of a God incapable of good without recompense should also be deprived of this highest form of moral quality.

The mighty Epiphany which aroused the dormant powers of man's nature and brought about through

ISLAMIC REVIEW

the Muslims of early days a wholesale metamorphosis of human society, consists in the Divine attribute known as *rahmaniyyat*. Like everything else in the realm of creation, man has quite a heap of calls of nature to attend to, upon the satisfaction of which depends his welfare—nay, his very existence. But it is beyond his power to provide the means wherewith to satisfy such calls. There are some of these requirements of our nature that must be provided for, even before we come into being, or our very existence would be an impossibility. The breasts of a mother must have milk in store for the child long before its birth. Air, water, heaven and earth—in a word, the entire system of this universe as it is—must be there, before a child may take birth. The existence of all these things is an indispensable necessity for its life. The Compassionate and Merciful God has taken good care to make the necessary provision for us. But what for? Not in return for any good offices we have done Him, but merely out of His spontaneous loving grace. All this is the manifestation of the Divine attribute called *rahmaniyyat* in the Holy Qur-án.

Besides what is indispensable for our very existence, at every step in our daily life we are likewise helpless and utterly dependent upon Divine grace. Every act of ours, every movement on our part, requires the pre-existence of certain material, beyond our power to create. What would all the skill of a carpenter or a smith avail unless God were gracious enough to have created the requisite material—wood, iron and fire—out of His mere bounty? Similarly, every art, every craft, every phase of human activities, is dependent upon some material, out of our power to create. And are not our own various limbs and joints, our hands and feet, our head and heart, the different manifestations of which are known as various arts, the unearned grace of God? These blessings of God, that

THE GOSPEL OF FELICITY

come spontaneously, know no distinction of caste, creed, colour or clime. Those, however, which come to us as the product of our own labours—and these also are rewarded with tenfold of what is our due or hundredfold or even more—are, according to Islamic classification of Divine attributes, the manifestation of *rahimiyyat*. Traditions have brought down a report from the Holy Prophet saying that Divine *rahmaniyyat* showers its blessings on all alike, irrespective of any distinctions, whereas His *rahimiyyat* is exclusive in its bounty to the believers. This embodies a great truth which, unfortunately, the Muslims have failed to realize. They have put upon it an interpretation which has led all the more to their ruin. This is how they construe it: "We are the chosen of God, His favourites. Let these non-believers enjoy this short-lived earthly life; we will have the next life all to ourselves. Let them avail of Divine *rahmaniyyat* here, but when the time comes for the exercise of His *rahimiyyat* they will be pushed off. Every bliss will then be reserved exclusively for the believers." So far, so good. The manifestation of *rahimiyyat* has no doubt been limited to the believer. But who is a believer? Surely not one who merely professes to be so. A true believer is a **MAN OF ACTION**. Let the Muslim think within himself—the so-called Muslim—if, according to this definition, he can find a place under the category of believers. Has he not heard of another saying equally true: "Whosoever is blind in this life, he shall be blind in the life to come—nay, even more misguided"?

The motive underlying this New Islamic Epiphany was to rescue man from the slough of despondency for lack of means. Should he care to enter the field of **ACTION**, want of requisite material may not stand in his way. For this reason, the Book of God, as well as every chapter contained therein, opens with the words: "In the name of Allah,